



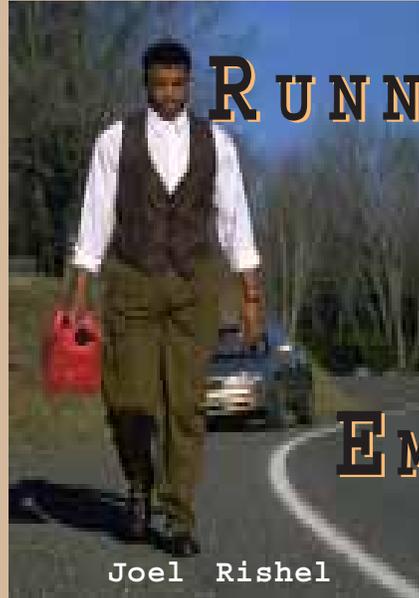
Character Building Ministries
660 Dow Avenue #1, Carnegie, PA 15106
www.CBMinistries.com

EDIFY

The Newsletter of Character Building Ministries

Fall 2001

Character Building Ministries is dedicated to the edification of Christian camp staff by equipping them in the Word of God.



Joel Rishel

Let me tell you a story.

I knew a counselor who had served effectively at a Christian camp for

several years. He was diligent, responsible, well liked by the campers, and spiritually mature. It was not a surprise to anyone when he was asked to begin serving in leadership roles.

My story about him has to do with his first year as a Program Director. He started off the summer with lofty spiritual goals for himself, for his staff, and for the campers. By the second week of camp the trials and pressures of equipping his staff, combined with the overwhelming needs of campers, pretty much absorbed all his attention, and he began to neglect his spiritual walk with Christ. His ministry began to be tainted with pride and arrogance. He told himself that he was spiritually strong and mature and really didn't have the luxury to devote as much time as he would like to personal devotions.

By about the middle of the summer he was continually comforting himself with the thought

Continued inside ...

This free Newsletter is sent to leaders and directors of Christian youth camps who are concerned about the spiritual growth and development of their staff.

What's Inside?

For Directors

Are you maintaining a regular devotional time? This issue's article retells the all-too-familiar scenario of what happens when a director is not being refreshed daily in the Word.

5 Great Years

Character Building Ministries celebrates five years of ministry. Review our history with us and see which camps have been with us since the beginning.

Helpful Resources

See what other directors are saying about CBM's 2001 devotional, *Bread of Life*. Other useful resources are available for you to view on our website, CBMinistries.com.

that the majority of his work was spiritual and devotional in nature. Time spent preparing meditations and Bible studies for the staff or for campers would serve as personal devotions. Pretty soon the alarm clock was permanently set to 6:50 instead of 6:00, allowing just enough time to put in his contacts and run to the 7:00 meeting with his counselors.

As the final weeks of that summer slipped away, he realized that his spiritual leadership wasn't at all what he thought it would be. He was embroiled in numerous personality conflicts. His arrogant approach to leadership had increasingly offended others. When caring friends

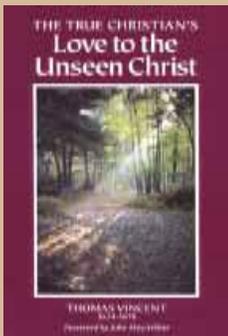
attempted to bring input and correction into his life, he responded self-defensively. While the program itself ran smoothly, his total spiritual influence and effectiveness ranked somewhere between poor and non-existent.

If you haven't already guessed, this story is about myself. I am completely ashamed to confess that by the end of that summer I hardly even felt guilty for skipping personal devotions. I plowed ahead in my role of leadership without really sitting at the feet of Jesus. I attempted to serve and minister to others without feeding myself from the Word of God. My entire summer was essentially void of personal prayer.

The Lord is my Shepherd, so I must sit at His feet each morning.

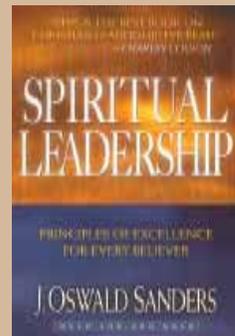
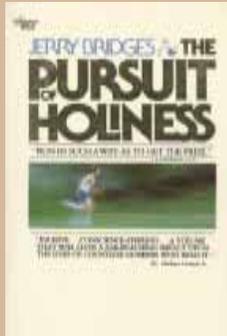
Transforming the Mind

How are you strengthening your walk during the “off” season of camp? With time easier to come by, consider challenging yourself by expanding your reading list and allowing the Spirit of God to transform your mind. Pick from this list of recommended readings and then watch as He transforms your ministry.



To challenge yourself to love Jesus Christ more, read a real classic (17th century) by Thomas Vincent entitled *The True Christian's Love to the Unseen Christ* (Soli Deo Gloria, 1993).

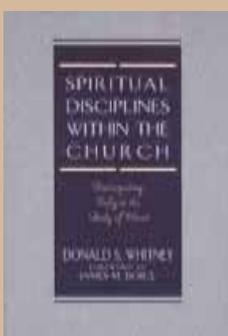
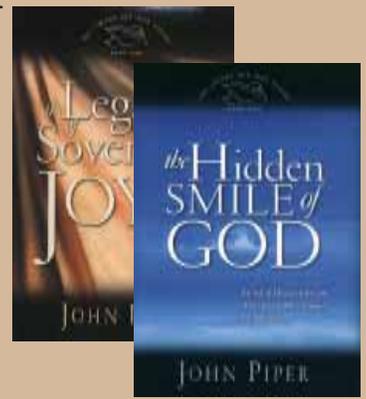
To encourage you in your pursuit of personal holiness read Jerry Bridges' classic, *The Pursuit of Holiness* (NavPress, 1978).



For a refreshing look at leadership issues, read J. Oswald Sanders' popular book, *Spiritual Leadership* (Moody, 1967). Our goal is excellence, but Sanders reminds us that truly excellent leadership is spiritual in nature.

John Piper has written two challenging biography collections. The first one, *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy* (Crossway Books, 2000), contains bios of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. The second one,

The Hidden Smile of God (2001), presents Bunyan, Cowper, and Brainerd. This is encouraging reading for anyone in leadership because practical application is drawn from their lives—including their failures.



Donald Whitney's book entitled *Spiritual Disciplines of the Christian Life* (NavPress, 1991) will provide you with lots of material to instruct you in your own Christian life as well as Bible studies for your staff (a helpful study guide is also available).

These books can be ordered from your local Christian Bookstore or through these fine distributors: Cumberland Valley Book Service (800) 656-0231 www.cvbbbs.com / Christian Book Distributors (800) 247-4784 www.Christianbook.com

5 Great years

The burnout I experienced was more than just physical fatigue. It was spiritual. The difficulties and conflicts I faced had very little to do with others. They had very much to do with the fact that I had allowed sin to creep into my life unchecked. The lack of impact I had on others wasn't their fault for not listening; it was because I really had nothing spiritual to say.

I wish I could live that summer over again. I would reset the alarm clock for 6:00, and commit myself to spending time alone with God every morning. I would hold myself accountable to several close friends to ensure that I did not neglect that time. I would make them promise to regularly ask me what God was teaching me. I would value prayer so highly that the busier my schedule became, the more time I would feel the need to be in prayer. I would constantly remind myself that I should do more than just pray *for* the ministry; prayer *is* the ministry.

Psalms would become more precious and real to me. The Lord is my Shepherd, so I must sit at His feet each morning. I would pray that He would lead me beside still waters and refresh me in green pastures. He would restore my soul only when my soul was quiet in His presence. The inevitable valleys of summer camp would pose no real harm because I would be more diligent to pursue His presence every day. The rod of Scripture, as illuminated by the staff of the Holy Spirit, would comfort me when I spent time reflecting upon what God was saying to me through His Word. My head would be freshly anointed with the oil of His grace day by day. My cup would be filled up and spilling over with His mercy and goodness and righteousness. Then—and only then—would I be able to serve others from the overflow of what the Lord would first be doing in my heart.

Having experienced the damage and destruction of a prayerless ministry and service devoid of personal devotions, I never want to go back to that again. My own spiritual walk with my Good Shepherd must be my highest priority. Is it yours, or are you trying to run on empty? 

Joel Rishel is the Director of Publications for CBM and former Program Director for Camp Susque in Trout Run, Pennsylvania. You can email him at joel@CBMinistries.com.



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It does not seem all that long ago when Character Building Ministries published its first devotional book. Forty-one camps took the initiative five years ago to use *SonRise*, and that marked the beginning of a new ministry whose sole purpose was to equip Christian camp staff in the Word of God.

Since then CBM has continued to publish devotional books dedicated to the names of our great Savior, Jesus Christ: *Morning Star* (1998), *Dayspring* (1999), *Cornerstone* (2000), and *Bread of Life* (2001). We continue to see the blessings of God and are amazed that *Bread of Life* was distributed to 145 Christian camps nationwide and in Canada.

The staff of CBM would like to thank the following camps which saw the need for their staff to be in the Word and selected CBM to be their provider of quality, Christ-centered material since our beginnings in 1997.

Camp Men-O-Lan QUAKERTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

Camp Sankanac SPRING CITY, PENNSYLVANIA

Camp Shadyrest TRENTON, NEW JERSEY

Innabah Program Center SPRING CITY, PENNSYLVANIA

Inspiration Point CLITHERALL, MINNESOTA

Loucon Training & Retreat LEITCHFIELD, KENTUCKY

Mountain Lake Bible Camp NEW PRESTON, CONNECTICUT

The Oaks LAKE HUGHES, CALIFORNIA

Ponderosa Bible Camp MENTONE, ALABAMA

Spruce Lake Wilderness Camp CANADENSIS, PENNSYLVANIA

Timber-lee Christian Center EAST TROY, WISCONSIN

"I was incredibly pleased with the depth, interest, and ability to bring God's Word to a practical level that *SonRise* gave to our staff." (Spruce Lake Wilderness Camp)

"Very well done and very inclusive and thought provoking." (Innabah Program Center)

"I saw a craving for God's word develop this summer, partially due to the *SonRise* devotionals." (Inspiration Point)

"I saw the material meet the needs of the summer staff in many ways." (Camp Men-O-Lan)

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Return this card for a
FREE copy of our
2001 Devotional book,
Bread of Life.
See for yourself what
all the talk is about.

Return to: Character Building Ministries, 660 Dow Avenue #1, Carnegie, PA 15106

Bread of Life

A Nine Week Devotional
for Christian Camp Staff
Summer 2001



HERE'S WHAT DIRECTORS ARE SAYING

“Very practical, very applicable for camp servants.”

~ LAKE GENEVA YOUTH CAMP, WISCONSIN

“It deals with issues right when the staff is experiencing them.”

~ GRACE YOUTH CAMPS & RETREAT CENTER, MICHIGAN

“It hit the mark on a regular basis.”

~ HARMONY HEART CAMP, PENNSYLVANIA

“Excellent application of Christian principles to the camp setting.”

~ LOUCON TRAINING CENTER, KENTUCKY

Character Building Ministries' 2001 devotional book was called *Bread of Life*. It was used by 145 camps nationwide.

“It contained devotions that allow the staff members to see Christianity at work in the camp setting and help them to see Scriptural connections.”

~ CASCADE CAMP CHERITH, WASHINGTON

“People who weren't disciplined to have a daily Bible study would be more likely to continue on their own after they made it a habit.”

~ HARVEST MINISTRIES, MISSISSIPPI